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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/532,333	04/22/2005	Thomas Lich	10191/3768	9141

26646 7590 03/19/2009
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EXAMINER

GOODEN JR, BARRY J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3616

MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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03/19/2009

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/532,333	Applicant(s) LICH, THOMAS	
	Examiner Barry J. Gooden Jr.	Art Unit 3616	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 05 March 2009.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 10-23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 10-23 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

2. Claims 10-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. In the instant case, claim 10 recites "measures **only** in a substantially vertical direction" however, the specification does not provide support for the claim terminology.

Examiner notes that the application may disclose aligned only in a substantially vertical direction, but that does not preclude a sensor with an wider angle than the angle for alignment from measuring in other directions. Since the applicant does not provide support for the range of measurement of the sensor, even though it may be aligned substantially vertically, "measures **only** in a substantially vertical direction" is not supported by the specification.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 10-13 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Andre et al., DE 19822184.

In regards to claims 10-13 and 16, Andre et al. discloses all of the claimed elements including a device for detecting an obstacle underide, comprising:

at least one vertical distance measuring device (2) situated on a vehicle front in such a way as to detect an obstacle underide, wherein the vertical distance measuring device measures in a substantially vertical direction (Reference is made to Figures 1 and 2) away from a vehicle underside (Reference is made to Figure 2);

wherein the vertical distance measuring device includes at least one transceiver;

wherein the at least one transceiver includes one of an ultrasonic sensor or a radar sensor;

wherein the vertical distance measuring device includes at least one video sensor; and,

wherein the device is connectable to a control unit for a restraining arrangement in such a way that the control unit triggers the restraining arrangement as a function of a signal of the device (Reference is made to Figure 2 and the Abstract).

Examiner notes with respect to claim 10, the recitation that the device situated on a vehicle front “configured to detect”, does not serve to distinguish because it is a functional recitation. Furthermore it has been held that performing a function is not a positive limitation but only requires the ability to so perform. Examiner suggests replacing with a positive structural recitation.

An apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function. Apparatus claims cover what a device is, not what a device does. A claim containing a recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the claim (Reference is made to MPEP 2114).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 14, 15, and 18-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Andre et al.

In regards to claims 14 and 18, Andre et al. discloses all of the claimed elements excluding the vertical distance measuring device explicitly located on a bumper or the vertical distance measuring device being situated on the rear bumper.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have located the vertical distance measuring device on the front or rear bumper, since it has been held that rearranging parts of an invention involves only routine skill in the art and since it is old and well known that a bumper is generally the first item to sense oncoming, impending and/or occurring data, distances and impacts, as such it is obvious to provide sensors, impact sensors, infrared sensors, lights, distance sensors, deer whistles and impact absorbing material placed on the bumper.

In regards to claim 15, Andre et al. discloses all of the claimed elements excluding the at least one device comprising four vertical distance measuring devices.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have provided four vertical distance measuring devices as claimed, since it has been held that mere duplication of the essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art and since it is old and well known to provide multiple sensors so as to enable fault detection, redundant detection, stereoscopic sensing and to cover a wider area.

Applicant has not refuted that rearranging parts or duplicating parts is within the skill of those in the art and as such it is being taken as an admission of prior art.

7. Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Andre et al. in view of Cho, US Patent 6,408,237.

In regards to claim 17, Andre et al. discloses all of the claimed elements excluding the device configured for the purpose of sensing pedestrians.

Cho discloses a system utilizing EM radiation (radar) or ultrasonic device wherein the device is configured for the purpose of sensing pedestrians.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system of Andre et al. in view of the teachings of Cho to include the device configured for the purpose of sensing pedestrians so as to prevent damage to pedestrians during collision thereby increasing safety.

Applicant has not refuted that configuring a device for the purpose of sensing pedestrians as taught by Cho is within the skill of those in the art and as such it is being taken as an admission of prior art.

Examiner notes with respect to claim 10, the recitation that the device situated on a vehicle front "configured to detect", does not serve to distinguish because it is a functional recitation. Furthermore it has been held that performing a function is not a positive limitation but only requires the ability to so perform. Examiner suggests replacing with a positive structural recitation.

Examiner notes with respect to claim 17, the recitation wherein the device “is configured to sense pedestrians”, does not serve to distinguish because it is a functional recitation. Furthermore it has been held that performing a function is not a positive limitation but only requires the ability to so perform. Examiner suggests replacing with a positive structural recitation.

An apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function. Apparatus claims cover what a device is, not what a device does. A claim containing a recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the claim (Reference is made to MPEP 2114).

Response to Arguments

8. Applicant's arguments filed March 5, 2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Examiner maintains the previous rejection is proper.

In response to the applicant's arguments concerning “measures only in a substantially vertical direction” the claim terminology and the specification are not commensurate in scope, i.e. alignment does not equate to the range of measurement. As such, there is no support found for the claimed terminology. Examiner maintains the 112, 1st rejection is proper.

In response to the applicant's arguments concerning the art rejections, the arguments rely on terminology not supported by the specification and rejected under 112, 1st, since the examiner has shown the 112, 1st rejection to be proper the applicant's arguments are moot and not commensurate with the scope of the invention. Examiner maintains the previous art rejection is proper.

Examiner notes with respect to claims 14, 15 and 18, the applicant did not refute that rearranging parts or duplicating parts is within the skill of those in the art and as such it was taken as an admission of prior art. Furthermore, the applicant is now improperly attempting to utilize a statement of common knowledge in the applicant's specification to refute any common knowledge rational. It is clearly common knowledge that a bumper is the first item to sense oncoming, impending and/or occurring data, distances and impacts. That is the reason for a bumper and why it is where impact sensors, infrared sensors, occasionally lights, distance sensors, deer whistles and impact absorbing material are placed. Additionally it is common knowledge to place multiple sensors so as to enable fault detection, redundant detection, stereoscopic sensing and to cover a wider area. A statement in the applicant's specification that coincides with common knowledge does not negate common knowledge as a reason for combining references.

Nevertheless, the applicant did not traverse the rejection which was included in the original non-final office action. The applicant argued that the reference did not include the sensor located as claimed or the number of claimed sensors, which would be a traversal to an anticipation reference as such the rejection was not traversed and

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was taken as admitted prior art. Further arguments directed at the rejection are deficient in overcoming the admitted prior art.

Conclusion

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Barry J. Gooden Jr. whose telephone number is (571)272-5135. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 8:00am-4:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Q. Nguyen can be reached on (571) 272-6952. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/John Q. Nguyen/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3616

Barry J Gooden Jr.
Examiner
Art Unit 3616

/BJG/